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HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT

Wednesday, June 24, 1931.

(NOT FOR PUBLICATION)

Subject: "Motor Trips with the Children." Information from the Bureau of
Home Economics, U.S.D.A.

--ooOoo--

The Jackson's new car has been the talk of our neighborhood for weeks. Mr. Jackson and Uncle Ebenezer have been discussing makes of cars, engines, brakes and so on for months. And Mrs. Jackson has been trying to decide between a bright blue finish-- a color she dearly loves--or a conservative black that will not startle the very conservative relatives she intends to visit.

Such plans the family have been making for the use of that new car! They have mapped out a trip for every Sunday. As for vacation, they plan to spend their full three weeks going across the country and sight-seeing, visiting the historic spots and also the relatives they haven't seen for years.

"Won't it be wonderful to have a big, roomy automobile, Aunt Sammy?" Mrs. Jackson has exclaimed to me many times. "I can just put the four children in the back seat and off we'll go for the day or the week-end. I'll be spared the bother of seeing that Joe and Jane don't quarrel and don't get into mischief. I won't even have to worry for fear Junior will spoil his best suit or the baby will fall off the back porch. My, what a relief and a pleasure my Sundays are going to be from now on!"

The car came. The neighbors all admired it. Mr. Jackson drove it back and forth to work a few times. And then, last Sunday, the family took their first all-day trip. They started off gayly. The children could scarcely wait to go. Mrs. Jackson put the lunch baskets and a suitcase containing bathing suits and towels in the back seat with the children. And they were off-- a very happy-looking group.

Much to our surprise they came back early in the afternoon. At a casual glance one could see that all had not gone well. They all looked tired. Mr. Jackson was in a temper. There were tear-marks on the youngsters' faces and they seemed only too glad to get back to their own backyard to play.

The next day Mrs. Jackson gave me an account of that first trip.

"The children spoiled the day by being perfect nuisances the whole time," she said. "They clamored to go, you know, and for the first half hour they seemed to enjoy the motion and change. After that they began to grow restless, to wriggle and twist about in the back seat, and try to climb over in front. Junior complained that his suit was too hot and uncomfortable. Jane said that with all the baskets on the floor there was no room for her

feet. Joe and Jane soon began scrapping and pushing each other about. Before their father and I could stop them, Joe had shoved Jane to the floor and she had landed right on the sandwiches. You can imagine the state our lunch was in when they were through. Both the children got a sound spanking from their father then and there. That quieted matters for a few minutes. But the wriggling and fussing began again until we finally had to give up and come home."

Uncle Ebenezer looked annoyed at this tale and muttered something about the unnecessary unpleasantness for the youngsters.

A friend of mine who has taken her family on many motor trips, both long and short, declares that these pleasure jaunts can be made into happy events for both children and grown-ups if consideration is given to the children's needs and comfort.

Since growing bodies need to move and should not be required to sit still for any length of time, children should be allowed to change places with those in the front seat and to shift their positions frequently. Also they should be allowed to get out once in a while and stretch their legs, - run about a little, play ball or tag or leap-frog a few minutes to get the exercise they need. Then they will not feel so cramped and restless in the next interval of riding.

One important provision for children's comfort in the back seat is to carry all the bags and bundles elsewhere. A rear-end box or trunk will hold many things and so will the left-hand running board, if a luggage rack is attached. Instead of a jumble of baggage in the back of the car, some sort of foot rest should be provided to give more comfort to small feet. A hassock or some rough porch pillows will do and will be useful also when it is time for the picnic lunch. Moreover, two or three soft, small pillows to tuck around the backs of any of the passengers, add greatly to comfortable riding and enable little children to take naps.

The clothes that children wear also make a good deal of difference to their comfort on a long trip. Miss Clarice Scott, the clothing specialist, who has so often given us helpful advice, says that knitted garments, like the fashionable cotton-mesh suits, make good motoring clothes for little boys and girls. They have no stiff or bulky parts, they look neat and can be easily laundered en route, since ironing is unnecessary. For the cool part of the day, little coat-style sweaters or jackets of knit material may be needed. In summer travelling, the middle of the day is likely to be extremely warm, garments that are hot may make the child restless or unhappy. At this period of the day, sweaters will probably not be needed.

An older boy of eight or ten will be comfortable in a blouse of the tennis type, with short sleeves and an open neck. Or the blouse may be of mesh. It is worn with light-weight shorts, which are such inexpensive garments that he can have several pairs to change into.

And the very young boy, what shall he wear? A sleeveless, collarless blouse and straight, knee-length trousers make a good outfit. The trousers may be supported by a cool net waist.

As for the little girl, she will be happiest in a sleeveless, low-necked pantie dress. It should be made of soft, smooth material that will

not soil easily. As the day cools off the children will need to put on their sweaters or little jackets over these outfits.

Clothes made of all-over prints reduce laundering on long trips, because they do not show travel stains easily and so look neater when the party stops. For little girls, dresses of all-over prints with small figures are attractive, convenient, and comfortable. So are wash silks, figured or plain. Fabrics that are smooth and comfortable to the touch are desirable. Avoid harsh, thick materials.

On their heads, the children need something that will stay on easily and keep their hair from whipping about in the breeze, will not be too tight, and will look neat. Berets or the beret type of cap is especially good for this purpose. Straw hats or others with brims are a nuisance unless they are the soft kind that can be rolled up and tucked away when not in use.

From clothes, let's turn to food. It is a curious fact that many mothers, who are most careful of the meals at home, let the children eat anywhere, everywhere, or anything out on a trip. Because of the early start in the morning, the youngsters may be hungry and thirsty before the family is ready to stop for a picnic lunch. At this point unwise parents may try to appease them with candy or pop or hot dogs at roadside stands. The menu specialist suggests that some juicy fruit or a thermos bottle of cold fruit juices with paper cups, drug store straws, and some simple cookies or crackers may be provided for a mid-morning or mid-afternoon lunch. This will please the children quite as well as peanuts, hot dogs, and soft drinks, constantly eaten through the trip, and will prevent digestive upsets afterwards. A wholesome fruit drink will quench the children's thirst, yet not spoil their appetites for regular meals.

Speaking of food for the children, it's about time for our Wednesday menu. Panned okra is the dish we are featuring today. Okra is one of the nicest of early summer green vegetables. The children especially like it, and in just a minute I'll give you the recipe.

Let's write the menu first. Cheese Souffle; Panned Okra; Tomato and Onion Salad; Whole Wheat Toast; Diced Fresh Pineapple and Cup Cakes, for dessert.

Just three ingredients for panned okra:

2 quarts of okra
4 tablespoons of butter or other fat, and
Salt to taste

Again. (Repeat)

Select young okra and wash it well. Cut it in crosswise pieces about 1/2 inch thick. Heat the fat in a heavy skillet. (Grandmother's iron skillet will be good for this). Add the okra, put a lid over the skillet and cook for 10 minutes. Stir it frequently to prevent burning. Remove the cover and continue to cook until the okra is tender and lightly brown. Then serve at once.

Thursday: "Books for the Homemaker."

